

December 2014 at BFI Southbank



Sci-Fi: Days of Fear and Wonder, Maggie Smith

Helen de Witt, Head of Cinemas, BFI said: “As we rocket towards the end of the year, make contact with our brothers, and sisters, from other planets and glory in in the prime of Dame Maggie Smith. Enjoy our Christmas family selection or pick your own favourite seasonal movie in our new Audience Choice programme.”

- The BFI’s biggest ever blockbuster season, *Sci-Fi: Days of Fear and Wonder*, continues at **BFI Southbank** in December with screenings of no less than **30 essential Sci-Fi films** and events themed around our final theme **CONTACT!** Highlights will include **Star Wars Day**, a day dedicated to the mother of all Space Operas, a very special screening of *Blade Runner: The Final Cut* (1982) ahead of the BFI’s theatrical re-release, a preview of **Alex Garland’s *Ex Machina*** (2014) with a Q&A with Garland and science advisor **Dr Adam Rutherford**, and the **Radiophonic Workshop Live**. Plus, a film programme to satisfy Sci-Fi aficionados and novices alike.
- As part of *Sci-Fi*, *Inside Afrofuturism* will examine black visions of Sci-Fi; the strand concludes in December with screenings of *Sankofa* (1993) and *Brother From Another Planet* (1984) and a very special *In Conversation* event with Hip Hop pioneer, **Afrika Bambaataa** on December 1.
- The extended run of **Stanley Kubrick’s** masterpiece *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968), presented in a stunning 4k digital restoration, continues throughout December. The release will be celebrated with a special event with **Sir Christopher Frayling** looking at the visionary design of 2001.
- *Sci-Fi* for families continues with screenings of *20,000 Leagues Under the Sea* (1954), *Daleks – Invasion Earth 2150AD* (1966) and *The Glitterball* (1977). Often cited as a precursor to *ET*, *The Glitterball* was made by the Children’s Film Foundation and director by Harley Cokeliss, who will join us to introduce the screening.
- Away from the world of Sci-Fi Maggie Smith will grace the screens of BFI Southbank in a dedicated two month season, concluding in January. Part one will include rarely seen works such as *Play of the*

Week: For Services Rendered (1959) as well as her break-through role in **The VIPs** (1963) alongside Elizabeth Taylor and Richard Burton.

- BFI Southbank welcomes in the Christmas season with a special programme of festive films for all ages to enjoy. With an extended run of **Guys and Dolls** (1955), classics such as **It's a Wonderful Life** (1946), **Meet Me in St. Louis** (1944) and **Scrooge** (1951) and even the opportunity for audiences to pick their favourite Christmas film to see on the big screen, there will be countless ways to while away the winter nights and build excitement for the big day.
- On Sunday 7 December **John Cleese** will join us for an event to celebrate the discovery of two episodes of **At Last the 1948 Show** (1967), a forerunner of *Monty Python* starring John Cleese, Tim Brooke-Taylor, Marty Feldman, Graham Chapman and “the lovely” Aimi Macdonald. The BFI has been painstakingly restoring the series with material found from various sources and a significant new discovery earlier this year provided us with two episodes previously thought lost – fittingly, the very first and very last episodes, complete save for a few minutes in each case. We screen this newly retrieved material either side of a panel discussion.
- Further highlights include a preview screening of **The Theory of Everything** (2014), based on the memoirs of Stephen Hawking’s first wife Jane, and directed by Oscar Winning filmmaker **James Marsh** (*Man on Wire*). Plus TV previews of **Mapp and Lucia** (BBC, 2014) starring Miranda Richardson and Steve Pemberton (who will also join us for Q&A) and **The Boy in the Dress** (BBC, 2014), adapted from **David Walliams’** best-selling book for children. Walliams will also join us for a Q&A and will be signing copies of his books at the BFI Shop after the screening.

SCI-FI: DAYS OF FEAR AND WONDER

Sci-Fi: Days of Fear and Wonder presented together with **02**, will celebrate cinema and television’s most spectacular and visionary genre, exploring how the fear and wonder at its heart continues to inspire and enthrall. The December offering for the season at **BFI Southbank** will focus on what happens when we make **Contact!**

Events highlights in December include **Star Wars Day – Saturday 13 December** will be dedicated to the mother of all Space Operas with screenings of the special editions of **Star Wars Episode IV: A New Hope** (1977), **Star Wars Episode V: The Empire Strikes Back** (1980) and **Star Wars Episode VI: Return of the Jedi** (1983), with special guests to be announced in due course. Prizes will be given to audience members who dress to impress, and at the end of the night there will be a themed DJ set and space inspired cocktails in benugo, which will be transformed into the BFI’s own Mos Eisley Cantina.

Presented as part of Days of Fear and Wonder, BFI Southbank will host a special screening of **Blade Runner: The Final Cut** (1982) on 14 December. Audiences at BFI Southbank and a wide range of venues across the UK will also have the opportunity to see Ridley Scott’s dystopian Sci-Fi masterpiece on the big screen that day - this will be the only chance for audiences to experience Ridley Scott’s iconic sci-fi classic in cinemas ahead of its nationwide release in 2015.

Alex Garland’s new film **Ex Machina** (2014) will preview with a Q&A with Garland and science advisor **Dr Adam Rutherford**. Music events at BFI Southbank will include the **Radiophonic Workshop Live** following a screening of **The Boy from Space** (BBC, 1971), for which they provided the music. BFI Southbank will also celebrate the small screen adventures of **Blake’s 7** in a special event on 5 December, with cast members **Paul Darrow** and **Michael Keating**, with more guests due to be announced in due course.

Novelist **SF Said** will consider the rich variety of ways in which the alien has been imagined in Sci-Fi film and TV in a special talk **The Alien and Me**. A number of the aliens under discussion will feature in our core programme for the month, with no less than 30 Sci-Fi films on offer. From 50s classics **The Day the Earth Stood Still** (1951) and **Forbidden Planet** (1956) to 70s classics **Alien (Director's Cut)** (1979) and **Close Encounters of the Third Kind** (1977); from low budget British flick **Monsters** (2010) to under-appreciated Jodie Foster led thriller **Contact** (1997), plus family fun with **Daleks – Invasion Earth 2150AD** (1966) and **The Glitterball** (1977) - the season has something for everyone.

INSIDE AFROFUTURISM

As part of **Sci-Fi**, BFI Southbank will host **Inside Afrofuturism**, a weekend devoted to exploring **Afrofuturism**, a phrase which has come to define works that engage with ideas around imagined possible future worlds from a black perspective. The **Inside Afrofuturism** weekend will conclude on December 1 with a screening of **Sankofa** (1993), the devastating tale of a black model who is transported back in time to a slavery plantation and a very special *In Conversation* event with Hip Hop pioneer **Afrika Bambaataa**.

MAGGIE SMITH

Throughout **December 2014** and **January 2015**, BFI Southbank celebrates the work of **Dame Maggie Smith**. One of Britain's best loved and most recognisable actresses, the two part season will reflect the sheer breadth of work she has carried out on both stage and screen in a career that has, thus far, spanned six decades and innumerable accolades. Part one of the season features examples of both well known and lesser seen performances from the early part of her career. From the rarely seen 1959 television drama **Play of the Week: For Services Rendered** to her international break-through acting alongside **Elizabeth Taylor** and **Richard Burton** in **The VIPs** (1963), audiences will also have the opportunity to witness her heart-breaking role as Desdemona opposite **Laurence Olivier's** Moor in **Othello** (1965). There is also a rare chance to see her talk about acting in general in the BBC documentary **Acting in the Sixties: Maggie Smith** which includes her words on Olivier, 'I was in awe of him... at first' and which features precious footage from otherwise missing TV productions such as her role in **The Recruiting Officer**

Part two of the season looks at Maggie Smith's more recent work and includes such modern classics as **A Room with a View** (1985), **Tea with Mussolini** (1999) as well as **California Suite** (1978), for which she won her second Academy Award. Some of her more recent television work will also be represented with screenings of both Jack Clayton's BBC production of **Memento Mori** (1992) and **Richard Eyre's Suddenly Last Summer** (1993)

CHRISTMAS

As the winter nights draw ever closer, BFI Southbank invites audiences in from the cold for a special programme of films perfect for the Christmas season; an extended run of the joyous **Guys and Dolls** (1955) will keep the winter blues at bay, while Christmas classics such as **It's a Wonderful Life** (1947) and **Meet Me in St. Louis** (1944) will provide fun for all the family. Plus, in a new monthly slot, BFI Southbank will offer audiences the opportunity to pick their favourite film under a theme related to the programme, this month: your favourite Christmas film. We will screen the film that gets the most votes over 100 (subject to availability in the UK), so that audiences can have the chance to have their own specially programmed Christmas night out.

Puppets at Christmas: Celebrating Puppets With Attitude will look at the long tradition of puppets on British television. Hosted by **Clementine the Living Fashion Doll**, our guide for the evening will introduce us to the puppet stars of yesterday with clips from the likes of: Pinky and Perky; Basil Brush; Mademoiselle Zizi; Topo Gigio; Lamb Chop and Lord Charles. Finally, for those of the opinion

that ‘*Christmas, sir, is humbug,*’ a visit to BFI Southbank to see **Scrooge** (1951) is highly recommended to reinstall some vital Christmas cheer.

– ENDS –

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NOTES TO EDITORS:

BFI SOUTHBANK EVENT LISTINGS FOR DECEMBER

Preview: The Theory of Everything

UK 2014. Dir James Marsh. With Felicity Jones, Eddie Redmayne, Charlie Cox. 123min. Digital. Cert tbc. Courtesy of Universal Pictures

This critically acclaimed biopic from Oscar®-winning director James Marsh (*Man on Wire*) is based on the memoirs of Stephen Hawking’s first wife Jane, who met Stephen at Cambridge. When Hawking is diagnosed with motor neurone disease, their passion for life – and each other – grows, and he embarks on his famous study into the nature of time and space. Jones and Redmayne are compelling leads in this moving study of exceptional strength and spirit.

Tickets £16, concs £12 (Members pay £1.50 less)

Mon 8 Dec 20:00 NFT1

TV Preview: Mapp and Lucia + Q&A

BBC 2014. Dir Diarmuid Lawrence. With Anna Chancellor, Miranda Richardson, Steve Pemberton, Mark Gatiss. Ep1: 60min

The teacups are rattling and umbrellas raised as Mapp and Lucia prepare to do battle over issues of etiquette and status. It’s 1930, and Mrs Emmeline Lucas (Chancellor) arrives to take her holiday in the historic town of Tilling, only to find herself at odds with self-appointed social doyenne Elizabeth Mapp (Richardson). EF Benson’s comic creations are affectionately brought back to the screen by Steve Pemberton in this charming BBC drama.

We’re delighted to welcome director Diarmuid Lawrence, writer-actor Steve Pemberton and actor Miranda Richardson for a Q&A

Wed 10 Dec 20:30 NFT1

20,000 Leagues Under the Sea

USA 1954. Dir Richard Fleischer. With Kirk Douglas, James Mason, Peter Lorre. 127min. U

Captain Nemo (James Mason) is a tortured soul with a loyal crew and a submarine – the Nautilus – at his beck and call. Working out of his secret island base, he carries out attacks on warships in order to avenge a family tragedy. When he agrees to allow three shipwrecked sailors on board the vessel, he puts in motion a series of events that provide thrills, action and high-seas adventure. Based on Jules Verne’s classic novel, and personally produced by Walt Disney himself, this steam punk sci-fi tale continues to be a family favourite 60 years after its initial release.

Sat 20 Dec 13:00 NFT2

Daleks – Invasion Earth 2150AD

UK 1966. Dir Gordon Flemyng. With Peter Cushing, Bernard Cribbins, Roberta Tovey. 84min. Digital. U

The Doctor travels forward in time to the year 2150. He arrives in London to find that the Daleks have invaded, and are either sending human beings to toil in their vast mines or turning them into Robomen – their slaves. Working alongside the resistance movement, the Doctor and his companions must find a way of thwarting his arch enemies before they too are brainwashed and turned into Robomen.

Sun 7 Dec 14:00 NFT2

The Glitterball + Introduction

UK 1977. Dir Harley Cokeliss. With Ben Buckton, Keith Jayne, Marjorie Yates. 56min. Digital. U

An extra-terrestrial space ship crash lands on Earth. Separated from its own people, the alien pilot explores the local area while looking for a way of restoring communication. With its insatiable appetite linked to its ability to generate power, the alien sets out on an eating spree. Made by the Children's Film Foundation, *The Glitterball* is often cited as being a pre-cursor to *E.T.*, which was released five years later.

We're delighted to welcome director Harley Cokeliss to introduce this screening

Sat 13 Dec 13:30 NFT2

Funday TV Preview: The Boy in the Dress + Q&A with David Walliams

BBC 2014. Dir Matt Lipsey. 60min

Dennis is an ordinary boy who lives in an ordinary town, but he feels different. A glimpse of a fashion magazine introduces him to a whole new world of colour and creativity, but can a boy wear a dress, and what will the headmaster, his Dad, and his friends in the football team think if they find out? *The Boy in the Dress* is adapted from David Walliams' best-selling book for children.

We're pleased to welcome David Walliams for a Q&A, plus he'll be signing copies of his books at the BFI Shop after the screening

Sun 14 Dec 14:00 NFT1

Funday Workshop

The Boy in the Dress is based on David Walliams' best-selling book for children. Come along to our Funday workshop with your favourite book and tell us how you would make it into a film. We'll be asking you to draw your favourite characters and sketch scenes from the book to show us how they would look on the big screen. With the usual arts and craft stands and prizes for the most imaginative adaptations, don't miss this special Funday workshop!

Free to ticket holders of The Boy in the Dress

Sun 14 Dec 12:00 Foyer

Raw Shorts:

The Never-Ending Story: Editing and Narrative

So you have your rushes, you've recorded your sound and thanked the actors – now you need to do the editing! This month we'll have professional editors, colour graders and other post production specialists joining us to answer your questions and help you make the perfect final cut. This Q&A will be followed by an editing masterclass, where you'll learn different editing techniques, with a special focus on narrative storytelling in the cut. You can either bring along your own short film, or play around with our pre-recorded clips to get some hands-on experience with editing software and pick up some tricks of the trade. We'll finish off the day with a networking session for young filmmakers and industry professionals.

Tickets just £6, or bring a friend for £10 (for 15-25 year-olds only)

Sat 13 Dec 12:30 NFT3

BAFTA Masterclass: Cinematography with Dick Pope

Beginning his career as a documentary film cameraman, Dick Pope travelled the world to remote areas, including war zones, for many broadcasters. After shooting concerts and music videos for artists from Queen to Tina Turner, Pope moved into drama with a BAFTA nomination as DoP on TV series *Porterhouse Blue*. He's collaborated with Mike Leigh from *Life is Sweet* to *Mr. Turner*, and his other film credits include *Nicholas Nickleby*, *The Illusionist*, *Man of the Year*, *Me and Orson Welles* and *Legend* – a film about the Kray Brothers, starring Tom Hardy.

Tickets £11.50, concs £9 (Members pay £1.50 less)

Tue 9 Dec 18:15 NFT3

BUG 45: The Evolution of Music Video

The BUG team tirelessly scour the music video ether, searching in all of filmmaking's darkest recesses for the most startling and inventive slices of miniature cinema. Presented on the BFI's big screen, with a dose of live comedy thrown in, these curated selections never fail to inspire the imagination and please the ears. So come on down and join us for the last BUG jamboree of 2014. Please book early to avoid disappointment.

Tickets £16, concs £12 (Members pay £1.50 less)

Thu 4 Dec 18:30 NFT1

Thu 4 Dec 20:45 NFT1

BFI Flare Presents: Peter de Rome: Grandfather of Gay Porn + Q&A with Producer David McGillivray

UK 2014. Dir Ethan Reid. 97min. Digital

This wonderful film reveals the extraordinary life and works of a true pioneer whose unique films document gay life. Inspired by Cocteau and Warhol, de Rome initially made experimental 8mm films for his own pleasure while living in New York in the 60s. The documentary includes interviews with friends, fans and filmmakers, and explores his enthusiastic rediscovery by a 21st-century audience.

Tue 9 Dec 20:30 NFT2

Puppets at Christmas

With Clementine the Living Fashion Doll

TRT 90min

A major feature of the 60s and 70s British TV schedules was the regular appearance of a host of beloved puppet entertainers, both as guest stars and as stars of their own shows. They could be glove puppets, marionettes or ventriloquist dummies, but the one thing they had in common was fully realised personalities that made them as memorable as any human performer. Join our host Clementine as she introduces us to the puppet stars of yesteryear, including: Pinky and Perky; Basil Brush; Mademoiselle Zizi; Topo Gigio; Lamb Chop and Lord Charles.

Tue 9 Dec 18:10 NFT1

Missing Believed Wiped: John Cleese Introduces At Last the 1948 Show

ITV 1967. With John Cleese, Graham Chapman, Tim Brooke-Taylor, Aimi MacDonald. TRT 110min

We're delighted to welcome John Cleese to BFI Southbank for an on-stage discussion about the seminal ITV comedy sketch series *At Last the 1948 Show*. The BFI have been painstakingly restoring the series with material found from various sources. Earlier this year a significant new discovery provided us with two previously thought lost episodes – fittingly, the very first and very last episodes, complete save for a few minutes in each case. We screen this newly retrieved material either side of our discussion.

Sun 7 Dec 14:40 NFT1

Our World

BBC 1967. TRT 150min

The Missing Believed Wiped initiative not only concerns lost material, but occasionally highlights significant discoveries of items that are in better condition than the footage currently held. In Norway's NRK archive the BBC unearthed a mint condition copy of the epic globe-spanning 1967 live television event *Our World*, which linked broadcasters across the planet, with each one presenting significant cultural moments from their homelands. This is a rare opportunity to see the complete recording.

Sun 7 Dec 17:10 NFT1

The Woman in the Hall

UK 1947. Dir Jack Lee. With Ursula Jeans, Jean Simmons, Cecil Parker. 89min. PG

As today's Britain sees the gulf between rich and poor grow ever wider, this post-war melodrama explores an unconventional way of evening up the balance. Widowed Lorna Blake is a professional beggar, pouring out tales of woe to the wealthy to support herself and her two daughters. But such dubious morality sends her youngest – a convincing performance from Jean Simmons – down the wrong path. While critics balked at the sensational story, Lee's skill with cast and camera keeps his feature debut from becoming over-the-top. Having graduated from filming war-time propaganda, Lee brought in fellow documentarist John Krish as editor to maintain the realist feel. In a nice touch, a lyric sung by Simmons was penned by Lee's brother, writer Laurie Lee.

Introduced by Jo Botting, BFI Archive Curator

Wed 3 Dec 18:00 NFT1

Seniors' Archive Free Matinee: Scrooge

UK 1951. Dir Brian Desmond-Hurst. With Alastair Sim, Jack Warner, Kathleen Harrison. 86min. U

'Christmas, sir, is humbug' utters Alastair Sim's (most would say definitive) portrayal of Charles Dickens' miserly businessman, Ebenezer Scrooge. Though joined by an impressive array of British acting talent, Sim dominates this festive classic, deftly switching between drama and comedy with ease.

Introduced by Graham Rinaldi, film lecturer, writer and Alastair Sim fan. Free for over 60s (booking by phone or in person only), otherwise normal matinee price.

Mon 8 Dec 14:00 NFT1

Destination: Planet Negro! + Q+A

USA 2013. Dir Kevin Willmott. With Tosin Morohunfola, Danielle Cooper, Kevin Willmott. 100min. Digital
Set in the 1930's, this hilarious movie has the look and feel of a cult sci-fi flick, yet the humour belies a sharply intelligent satire on race politics. Notable Americans of African descent meet to discuss the 'Negro Problem' and decide that the only solution is to leave planet Earth.

We're pleased to welcome director Kevin Willmott and guests including community educator, filmmaker and artist-activist Toyin Agbetu and lecturer Althea Legal-Miller.

Tickets £6.50

Sat 20 Dec 14:00 NFT1

Games of Love and Chance L'esquive

France 2003. Dir Abdellatif Kechiche. With Osman Elkharraz, Sara Forestier, Sabrina Ouazani. 123min. EST
Fifteen-year-old Krimeo is bored with life on his rundown estate, until he catches sight of his classmate Lydia rehearsing lines for a school play, Marivaux's love story 'A Game of Love and Chance.' Krimeo gets an idea of how to woo Lydia, and director Kechiche (*Blue is the Warmest Colour*) gets the opportunity to riff on the theme of class and capture his energetic young cast's quickfire slang.

Tue 2 Dec 18:00 NFT2

Sat 6 Dec 20:30 NFT2

The Door to the Sun Bab el shams

France-Egypt-Morocco-Denmark-Belgium 2004. Dir Youssef Nasrallah. With Hiam Abbass, Hussein Abou Seada, Fady Abou-Samra. 278min. EST

From a hospital in a Palestinian refugee camp in Lebanon we're transported on an epic journey covering some 50 years of Palestinian history through the life of a dying man, Younes. His story is remembered at his bedside as his friend chats with the nurse. Directed by one of Egypt's best-known directors, the film is based on the novel by internationally acclaimed Lebanese author Elias Khoury, and the complex structure invites us to reflect on the nature of memory and mythology.

Wed 10 Dec 17:50 NFT2

Sat 13 Dec 15:30 NFT2

The Yacoubian Building Omaret Yakobean

Egypt-France 2006. Dir Marwan Hamed. With Adel Imam, Nour El-Sherif, Youssra. 171min. EST. 15

If buildings could speak, the Yacoubian Building in downtown Cairo would tell the story of its great city; of the ambitions that inspired its grand architecture and influenced the lives of its glamorous past residents, to the political and social change that saw its roof overtaken by the poor and its main floors by the *nouveau riche*. Alaa Al-Aswany gives a voice to the Yacoubian Building, and adapts his 2002 best-selling novel for the screen, while director Marwan Hamed confronts the uncomfortable truths of pre-revolution Egypt with an all-star cast.

Tue 16 Dec 19:45 NFT2

Sun 21 Dec 15:00 NFT2

Incendies

Canada-France 2010. Dir Denis Villeneuve. With Lubna Azabal, Mélissa Désormeaux-Poulin, Maxim Gaudette. 130min. EST. 15

Young Canadian twins Simon and Jeanne embark on life-changing and frightening journeys to their mother's homeland and into her mysterious past. In her will, their mother (played by Lubna Azabal) asks for Jeanne to find the father she thought dead, and for Simon to track down the brother he never suspected having. Based on Wajdi Mouawad's 2003 play, *Incendies* is a powerful, thrilling and moving story about how the traumas of war and violence can transcend generations and geography.

Tue 23 Dec 20:15 NFT2

Sat 27 Dec 18:00 NFT2

The Passion of Joan of Arc *La passion de Jeanne d'Arc*

France 1928. Dir Carl Theodor Dreyer. With Maria Falconetti, Eugene Silvain, André Berley. 97min. Digital. PG
Consisting largely of close-ups, Dreyer's masterpiece is dominated by Falconetti's performance as Joan, mixing fear and suffering, supplication and exaltation. Paul Schrader describes how 'the architecture of Joan's world literally conspires against her; like the faces of her inquisitors, the halls, doorways and furniture are on the offensive, striking, swooping at her with oblique angles, attacking her with hard-edged chunks of black and white.'

Piano accompaniment Stephen Horne

*** Introduced by Kevin Brownlow**

Mon 1 Dec 18:10 NFT3*

Sat 6 Dec 15:00 NFT2

Late Spring *Banshun*

Japan 1949. Dir Yasujiro Ozu. With Chishu Ryu, Setsuko Hara, Haruko Sugimura. 108min. EST. U

For the critic Paul Schrader, Ozu exemplified what he called 'Transcendental Style in Film.' In *Late Spring* the inter-generational tensions forcing a family to change involve a widowed father (Ozu regular Chishu Ryu) and an unmarried daughter. As Schrader wrote: 'Ozu 'lives in' his actors, repeatedly using them... in film after film. For Ozu, transcendence is a communal activity; the individual reaches awareness by participation within a group.'

*** Introduced by Mamoun Hassan**

Mon 8 Dec 18:10 NFT2*

Thu 11 Dec 20:40 NFT2

Battleship Potemkin *Bronenosets Potemkin*

Soviet Union 1925. Dir Sergei Eisenstein. With Aleksandr Antonov, Vladimir Barsky. 72min. Digital. PG

In 1922 Lenin declared that 'of all the arts, cinema is for us the most important.' *Battleship Potemkin* was commissioned in 1925 to commemorate the 20th anniversary of the abortive 1905 revolution. One of cinema's genuine landmarks, Eisenstein's superbly choreographed film is one of the greatest examples of montage filmmaking. A powerful work of propaganda, *Battleship Potemkin* transcends its political purpose to become one of cinema's great statements.

*** Introduced by Ian Christie**

Mon 15 Dec 18:10 NFT2*

Fri 19 Dec 20:40 NFT2

Fantasia

USA 1940. Dir Norman Ferguson, James Algar, Samuel Armstrong, et al, with Leopold Stokowski and The Philadelphia Orchestra. 124min. Digital. U

'We're through with caviar. From now on it's mashed potatoes and gravy' was Walt Disney's reaction to *Fantasia's* short-lived commercial failure. That failure was temporary, and despite its occasional archness the film's extraordinary fusion of animation and music became a cinematic milestone. For Eisenstein, Disney 'seems to know not only the magic of all technical means, but also all the most secret strands of human thought, images, ideas, feelings...'

Mon 22 Dec 17:50 NFT1

Sat 27 Dec 14:20 NFT1

Intolerance

USA 1916. Dir DW Griffith. With Lillian Gish, Vera Lewis, Ralph Lewis, Douglas Fairbanks. 167min. Digital. PG

Eisenstein's concept of montage owed much to the cross-cutting of DW Griffith, which was pushed to the extreme in this modern tale of injustice, amplified with three historical narratives: ancient Babylon, the Crucifixion, and the St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre. But the sheer spectacle might have also appealed to the Eisenstein who loved 'the American Mountains' – the Russian term for a fairground rollercoaster – and who wanted the cinema to be just as electrifying.

Sat 27 Dec 14:40 NFT2

Mon 29 Dec 18:10 NFT2

It's a Wonderful Life

USA 1947. Dir Frank Capra. With James Stewart, Donna Reed, Henry Travers. 129min. Digital. U

Stewart plays a troubled small-town family man whose sense of failure and moral despair leads him to contemplate suicide as Christmas approaches. An impish guardian angel (second class) appears, to show him how good his life has been and to steer him back to happiness. Beautifully crafted and acted, its humour and gentleness imbued at times with an almost Dickensian darkness, the film has achieved cult status as one of the most popular and enduring of all Christmas entertainments.

Wed 17 Dec – Sun 28 Dec

Meet Me in St Louis

USA 1944. Dir Vincente Minnelli. With Judy Garland, Margaret O'Brien, Leon Ames. 113min. Digital. U

'Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas', sings Esther Smith (Garland) to her tearful little sister as they ponder the prospect of the family leaving behind their beloved St Louis to relocate in New York. Minnelli's great musical elegantly and eloquently expresses a warm nostalgia for a slower, gentler way of American life. A deceptively light script, fine performances and unforgettable musical numbers all contribute to the affectionate mood.

Tue 16 Dec 18:20 Studio

Sun 21 Dec 15:40 Studio

Sun 28 Dec 14:50 NFT3

Audience Choice

A new monthly opportunity for you to pick your favourite film under a theme related to the programme, this month: your favourite Christmas film. We've listed our top choices (including a few more cheeky suggestions) here, or you can suggest your own film. We'll play the one that gets the most votes over 100 (subject to availability in the UK). Get voting, and get your friends voting, so that you can have your very own Christmas night out at BFI Southbank.

Vote for:

The Wizard of Oz (1939)

Gremlins (1984)

Bad Santa (2003)

Rare Exports (2010)

... or a film of your own choosing!

Find out more, and vote, at: bfi.org.uk/xxxxxxxxxx

Voting closes 12 Nov with the film announced 17 Nov. Voters for the winning film will be contacted directly and receive a 48-hour priority booking period

Sun 14 Dec 20:50 NFT1

BFI Member Picks:

The Lady Vanishes

USA 1938. Dir Alfred Hitchcock. With Margaret Lockwood, Michael Redgrave, Paul Lukas. 96min

A rich young playgirl discovers that her elderly travelling companion has disappeared while they're travelling Europe by train. Don't miss this great opportunity to watch Hitchcock's comic thriller on the big screen.

Apply for up to two tickets, the first is free

Mon 8 Dec 18:00 NFT1